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# CONTENTS for MARCH

	PAGE
Frontispiece: Peggy Ashcroft and Ralph Richardson ...	3
Over the Footlights ...	5
New Shows of the Month ...	6-12
"The Way Back" ...	7
"Oranges and Lemons" ...	11
"Traveller's Joy" ...	13-20
"Miss Mabel" ...	21-23
"High Button Shoes" ...	24-28
"Can the Leopard . . . ?" by Eric Johns ...	29
Echoes from Broadway, by E. Mawby Green ...	31-33
Whispers from the Wings ...	32
English Plays in Moscow, by E. Parvatov ...	34-36
Middle East Forces' Theatre Club ...	36
Library Theatre, Manchester	37
Amateur Stage ...	39-40

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# THEATRE WORLD



Picture by Houston-Rogers

## Peggy Ashcroft and Ralph Richardson

as they appear in John Gielgud's production of the Broadway success, *The Heiress*, by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, which has had a big reception at the Haymarket Theatre. The performances of both Miss Ashcroft and Sir Ralph have been acclaimed as among the best of their careers. Certainly no finer acting is to be seen anywhere in the West End at the present time.



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P. 714A



# Theatre World

(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL and THE AMATEUR STAGE)

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Edited by Frances Stephens

March 1949

## Over the Footlights

THE return of Laurence Olivier to the New Theatre with the Old Vic Theatre Company which toured Australia and New Zealand, has been the big event of the past few weeks. The reception accorded the three productions in his present repertory, namely, *The School for Scandal*, *Richard III* and *Antigone*, has been overwhelming, and there is not likely to be an empty seat at the New until the season ends in May.

It is also pleasant to record that Ralph Richardson, who shared with Sir Laurence the laurels in past Old Vic triumphs, has met with a big success in *The Heiress* at the Haymarket, a choice play indeed, in which Peggy Ashcroft gives a lovely performance.

A number of plays have been produced too late for review this month. They include *Sweethearts and Wives* at Wyndhams, a play of naval manners by Gilbert and Margaret Hackforth-Jones, in which Patricia Burke and Jessie Matthews are the stars; *The Foolish Gentlewoman* by Margery Sharp, at the Duchess, with Sybil Thorndike, Lewis Casson and Mary Merrall in the leading parts; *The Compelled People* at the New Lindsey, a play with the Berlin Air Lift as background, by Lionel Birch; and *The Unquiet Spirit*, at the Arts, with Margaret Rawlings. There was also a revival of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, at Sadler's Wells Theatre on 22nd February, and the opening of the Roland Petit ballet season at Princes Theatre on 16th February, the day before Frederick Ashton's *The Wedding Bouquet* was revived at Covent Garden.

Among new productions in March will be *Love is a Funny Thing*, at the Ambassadors, a comedy from the French, with Mervyn

Johns in the lead; *Latin Quarter*, with Frances Day, at the London Casino, and *Foxhole in the Parlour* at the New Lindsey.

The Sadler's Wells Ballet commence a seven weeks season of ballets on 7th March during part of which Alexandra Danilova, Frederick Franklin and Leonide Massine will appear as guest artists.

Alexandra Danilova will be partnered by Leonide Massine in *La Boutique Fantasque*, and will dance in *Coppelia*, *Giselle*, *Le Lac des Cygnes* Act 2, and the *Black Swan* pas de deux, in all of which she will be partnered by Frederick Franklin. Leonide Massine will also appear in some performances of *Three Cornered Hat*, and Frederick Franklin will dance the title role in two performances of *The Rake's Progress*.

*Apparitions*, by Frederick Ashton with music by Liszt, and scenery and costumes by Cecil Beaton, will be revived on 24th March with Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann in the leading roles. Constant Lambert will conduct the first five performances.

Preparations are well ahead for the 1949 Stratford Festival, which opens on 16th April with *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* being the Birthday play. It promises to be a most interesting season, with John Gielgud, Michael Benthall and James Bailey as producers, and a strong company, including Godfrey Tearle, Diana Wynyard, Leon Quartermaine (playing for the first time at the Memorial Theatre), Harry Andrews (a leading member of the Old Vic Theatre Company for three seasons), Kathleen Michael (who made a deep impression in *People Like Us*), John Slater and Wynne Clark.

F.S.

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# New Shows of the Month

"The School for Scandal"—New, 20th Jan.  
 "The White Cliffs"—Richmond, 24th Jan.  
 "Mandragola"—Mercury, 24th Jan.  
 "Richard III"—New, 26th Jan.  
 "The Way Back"—Westminster, 27th Jan.  
 "The Merchant of Venice"—Bedford, 31st Jan.  
 "Here Come the Clowns"—New Lindsey, 31st Jan.  
 "The Heiress"—Haymarket, 1st Feb.  
 "Yedra Garsia"—Torch, 1st Feb.  
 "Widowers' Houses"—Arts, 2nd Feb.  
 "The Damask Cheek"—Lyric, Hammer-smith, 3rd Feb.  
 "Macbeth"—Bedford, 7th Feb.  
 "Antigone"—New, 10th Feb.  
 "The Human Touch"—Savoy, 11th Feb.  
 "Twelfth Night"—Bedford, 14th Feb.  
 "The Passing of the Third Floor Back"—Embassy, 15th Feb.

## "The School for Scandal" — "Richard III"—"Antigone"

THE current Old Vic Theatre Company's season, directed by Laurence Olivier, has brought back the old enthusiastic atmosphere to the New Theatre. The repertoire is nicely contrasted and each production a model of its kind. *The School for Scandal* is played against some exquisite Cecil Beaton drop-curtains in an unusual stylised manner with some groupings of the characters highly reminiscent of ballet technique. It seems legitimate enough to re-interpret Sheridan in this way and for Laurence Olivier to present a more sober Sir Peter and Vivien Leigh a deliciously vivacious if less countrified Lady Teazle. George Relph scores heavily as Sir Oliver Surface and Eileen Beldon as Mrs. Candour.

*Richard III* is given the same production as the original one which brought Olivier so great a personal triumph. If anything his performance this time seems even more outstanding in its subtlety, though this may be because the supporting company is not in all respects so strong.

The third play, *Antigone* (in modern dress) has proved a most interesting experience of gripping topicality. Written with crisp dialogue in the modern idiomatic style, the play, translated from the French, brings into sharp relief the philosophy behind the Greek original, though, of course, it is a new play and in no sense a translation or adaptation from Sophocles. As the Chorus Laurence Olivier, in immaculate evening dress, is superb, and memorable performances come from George Relph, a tower of strength and a sympathetic figure as Creon, and from

Vivien Leigh in the title role, a character swayed by principles rather than emotion and therefore none too easy to portray. *Antigone* plays without an interval, but does not seem a minute too long. In the same programme Chekov's *The Proposal*, an amusing piece of farcical nonsense played against a fantastically backgrounded by Roger Furse, is given as a curtain raiser, in which Peter Cushing, particularly, proves himself a comedian of real talent.

More will be said about these important productions in our next issue, when it is hoped to include pictures. F.S.

## "The White Cliffs"

THIS play by Ingram d'Abbes, which opened the new repertory season at Richmond, was here presented for the first time, though written five years ago. This delay, due to the fact that, set in Dover during the Battle of Britain, it has a war background, seems to have been unnecessary, for it is devoid of war horrors, and, starting as a family conflict drama, it finishes up as an exciting piece of first-rate theatre. It deals with a war correspondent's disgust at his son, a conscientious objector, until the latter changes his opinions after bringing off a thrilling rescue of an airman shot down in France.

A special cast was engaged, headed by Henry Oscar, who also produced, as the correspondent; and he was well supported by Mark Daly, Wally Patch, Cicely Paget-Bowman, Anne Trego and Michael Allinson. John Bryning was not fully at ease as the objector; and the same applied to Geoffrey Lovatt, a member of the theatre's repertory company, as the correspondent's boss. Also from the repertory company were Jeffrey Segal, excellent as a French fisherman, and Margot Boyd, to whom most of the abundant comedy relief was entrusted.

Well constructed and fast moving, this play might well merit a place in the West End. J.A.

## "Mandragola"

THE Mercury has had a "light-hearted reopening" with Machiavelli's comedy *Mandragola* in an admirable English text by Ashley Dukes. The story is pleasantly and humorously salacious in the best 1515 manner. It is recorded that Pope Leo X thought so highly of the work that he had a theatre built specially for its performance. It seems so perfect a comedy as to explain why its author never troubled himself to write another. The action is less involved

(Continued on page 8)



Finch: Go on, I tell you! I'm all right, go on! Get out of here!

The tense moment in the jungle after Finch, Coney's friend, has been hit by a Japanese sniper.

(Below):

Coney: Finch, Finch, is that you, Finch?

Later, in hospital, under the effects of a drug, Coney relives part of the scene which led to his shocked state and paralysis. (Stanley Maxted as the doctor.)

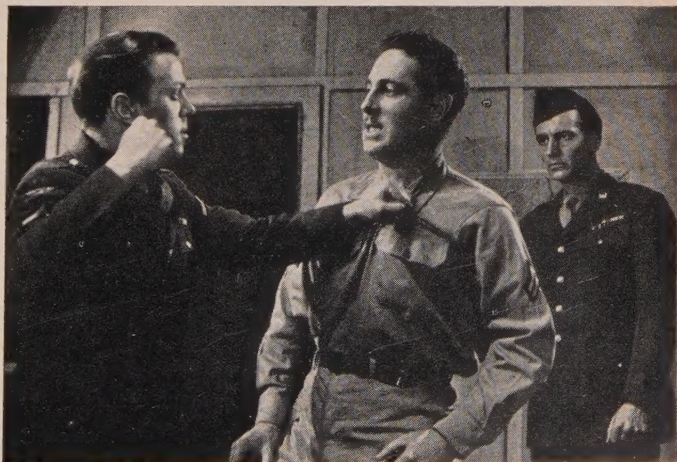


## “The Way Back”

● Scenes from Arthur Laurents' strong play at the Westminster Theatre in which Richard Attenborough returns to the stage in the leading role of the young Jewish soldier, Coney.

(Right):

Coney and Mingo (Robt. Ayres, right), who lost an arm on the expedition to the jungle, are being sent back to the States. T.J. (David Powell), who has been filled with resentment since the beginning, has just baited Coney about being a Jew.



PICTURES BY  
JOHN VICKERS



than in Shakespeare's comedies, for instance, and the adapter's English makes it easier fully to understand. The theme is cuckoldry and the young gallant who is enamoured of the young wife of an elderly lawyer exploits the legend of the mandrake root and its allied charms of eternal youth and sudden death. Hugh Griffith's performance as the elderly lawyer is a gloriously comic achievement, always nicely controlled. Michael Goodliffe is handsomely in period as the plotting gallant, well seconded by William Fox. The sombrely suggestive irony in the musical malice conveyed in Geoffrey Dunn's playing of the friar is very choice, very delightful. Patricia Hilliard brings to the part of the young wife the requisite artistry. Guy Sheppard's scene and costumes deserve praise. A harpsichord, played by John Ticehurst, provides the music—even "The King."

H.G.M.

### "The Way Back"

THE background of this play is a young Jew's racial inferiority complex, which might, of course, have asserted itself in many situations apart from the war, but the story of a group of young Americans' reactions in jungle warfare provides a gripping background theme, and the scenes which actually take place in the jungle are extremely dramatic.

The all male cast is very competent, though Richard Attenborough, while most persuasive in his many emotional scenes, fails to convince on the racial side. Stanley Maxted is splendid as the doctor who sets out to dispel Coney's inhibitions, and of the remaining cast this reviewer liked exceedingly Arthur Hill's sympathetic portrayal of Finch, Coney's faithful young friend. F.S.

### Donald Wolfitt Season

THE Bedford Theatre, Camden Town, for the first time in its history, is having a Shakespeare season. Donald Wolfitt, with his company, has been appearing there throughout February and we have seen to date his productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*. The support has been encouraging, though whether this be due to dwellers in Camden Town finding pleasure in Shakespeare or to hardy devotees beyond its borders finding their way to the Bedford is in some doubt. *Macbeth* has proved the most popular bill so far, raising bright hopes for the reception of *King Lear*, which is now promised.

The charm and high talent of Mr. Wolfitt and Miss Rosalind Iden are well-known and one can only say how pleasant it is to see them again. The production of *The Merchant of Venice* suffered from a rather tasteless and negligent decor, but the words were beautifully spoken. Donald Wolfitt's Shylock is a character fully and originally realised and his every phrase is a work of art. Rosalind Iden's Portia is happy and

gracious. All her speeches are as full of meaning as of music and her silence, for instance during Bassanio's choice, saves a familiar passage from anything like tiredness. Joseph O'Connor was a robust Gratiano, rather a whale among the Venetian minnows, and Anthony Cullen a dignified Antonio.

*Macbeth* was better mounted. The career and character of Macbeth is the whole of the tragedy that bears his name, whereas Shylock is only half of the play in which he appears. Partly for this reason, the present production of *Macbeth* is a much more satisfactory affair. Macbeth must be, after Lear, Donald Wolfitt's finest achievement. For power and poetry, one could not reasonably hope to see a better performer in the part. Patricia Jessel played Lady Macbeth as a delicate creature with a will of gleaming steel, viperous, thirsting for "solely sovereign sway and masterdom." Her change to a nervous somnambulist, re-enacting the night of the murder she had promoted, was pitiful but full of grace and awe. Anthony Cullen, both as Banquo and his ghost, gave a strong and impressive performance. Joseph O'Connor was Macduff and Bryan Johnson Malcolm. Their scene together in Act 4 went very well. Rosalind Iden drew sympathy for Lady Macduff. The important little Porter scene was played with humour and propriety by Will Leighton. The witches, led by John Killner, emerged and faded eerily and spoke with admirable clarity. Inevitably, one returns in memory to Macbeth's scenes. Always impressive, Donald Wolfitt was particularly fine with the murderers, and, on receiving the news of the death of the queen, his reaction was perfectly judged and his delivery of the elegy beyond praise.

*Twelfth Night* was strained to yield the maximum amount of mirth. It can be played more seriously and then makes a more satisfying comedy for intelligent people. The lines will not always sustain a riot of fun. One sometimes wonders if the actors themselves know what they are laughing at. Donald Wolfitt very skilfully made Malvolio extremely amusing and Alan Nunn was a capital Aguecheek. Bryan Johnson sang Feste's songs very well and was generally frolicsome. Rosalind Iden was a delightful Viola. She was particularly happy in her scenes with the Lady Olivia, but the "monument" passage with Orsino was rather "a blank, my lord." This disappointment was largely due to the setting of the scene, Viola standing behind Orsino, who was well played by Joseph O'Connor but terribly badly dressed. An ingenious use of screens gave fluidity to the production.

H.G.M.

### "Here Come the Clowns"

DURING February the New Lindsey Theatre Club presented the English première of another Broadway success, *Here*



*Come the Clowns*, by Philip Barry. A dozen well assorted variety artists are assembled in the Back Room of Ma Speedy's (Café des Artistes). In addition to their attachment to the stage, they have one thing in common, unhappiness. Whilst in general agreement on the vileness of life, they unconsciously weaken the force of this conclusion for us by the display of much mutual sympathy. Might we not hope that the current disposition to indict the deity on account of the present human welter may lead to a spread of humanism?

Most of the sympathy in the play goes to a stagehand, innocent and persecuted by fate, who searches distractedly for evidence of a good God and even addresses Him in an upraised voice of challenge. Later, voluntarily or involuntarily but certainly without external compulsion, he interposes himself to receive a couple of bullets fired at a professor of illusion, who had been making rather too much of the occasion professionally for the patience of an embittered press agent, who carried a gun. Denis Carey miraculously endowed the stage hand with something akin to holiness. Olaf Pooley played the inscrutable and unholy illusionist whose life he saves. The entire company acted with admirable sincerity. Henry Worthington, Maureen Pryor, Gillian Maude and Ron Parry played important parts and Campbell Gray provided a remarkably bland study as Ma Speedy. The production had been directed by Chloe Gibson. Once again Richard Lake's décor combined imaginative distinction with economy of space. H.G.M.

### "The Heiress"

THIS play by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, based on the novel "Washington Square," by Henry James, and directed by John Gielgud, with décor by Motley, has a grace and dignity not often seen on the present-day stage. If there is not much action, there is, by way of compensation, a real sense of the leisurely age which is its background, and ample opportunity for those actors and actresses taking the leading parts.

The story set in the middle 'nineties is simple enough, that of a wealthy and fashionable New York doctor and his plain, gauche daughter, whom he despises because she lacks the grace and charm of her mother, who died in childbirth. Catherine is wooed by an adventurer, but he deserts her before their elopement, when he discovers her fortune will be less than he expected. Later when Catherine, brokenhearted, learns of her father's real opinion of her, a hardness enters into her soul, and, ironically enough, she gains a new poise and dignity which enable her to wreak her revenge on her lover. This time it is she who breaks faith, and the final moment of the play, which shows her walking firmly upstairs to bed,

while her lover bangs distractedly on the door, provides one of the most impressive curtains we have seen.

As Catherine, Peggy Ashcroft is superb, and contrives to dim her own natural beauty of face and voice in no uncertain manner. Ralph Richardson's Dr. Sloper is splendidly clear cut, and what a pleasure to hear the lines so clearly spoken, every word as it were, carefully weighed and measured. James Donald has the somewhat unenviable task of portraying the lover, and acquits himself well, giving Morris Townsend a plausible charm. Gillian Lind is true to period as Catherine's sentimental aunt, and Ann Wilton in the small part of Morris Townsend's loyal sister, is most moving. F.S.

### "Yedra Garsia"

THE programme of Spanish Dances presented by Yedra Garsia attracted enthusiastic "capacity" audiences, who keenly enjoyed this rare and excellent form of entertainment. The blend of grace and excitement in these lovely dances was a most refreshing spectacle. Sentiment, drama, humour and passion were exquisitely expressed by the proudly stepping or

(Continued on page 10)



ROY DEAN

as he appears as "Casso" in the second act of Noel Langley's *Cage Me A Peacock*, at the Cambridge Theatre, which is nearing its 300th performance.

(Portrait by Angus McBean)



imperiously stamping dancers and the fascinating insistent clicking of castanets. Alas, for some reason, guitars failed to tinkle, but Anna Michaelson was a brilliant piano accompanist. Most of the dances were traditional, executed in couples by Consuelo Carmona and Angelo Andes, or by Angelita and Domingo. Their execution was superb. In addition, the singing with delightful humour of Domingo afforded a joy unforgettable. H.G.M.

### "Widowers' Houses"

**B**ERNARD Shaw's first play, *Widowers' Houses*, revived at the Arts Theatre, provided good entertainment and was of special interest to the Shaw "collector." The play tells a simple story to demonstrate the economics and ethics of slum landlordism so baldly that it might have been called "documentary," had that adjective acquired its present special meaning fifty years ago. For all that, the characterisation is more humanly recognisable than is usual in Shaw's plays. The small cast of six contains two of the author's best creations—Lickcheese and Cokane—worthy to rank beside old Doolittle and Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonnington. The production by Esme Percy, a Shavian veteran, was straightforward, tending to over-simplification. Mr. Sartorius's riverside residence and his house in Bedford Square had been amalgamated into one London address. The result may have been adequate to the purpose but it was something less than the author's design and it afforded correspondingly less pleasure to the beholder. John Ruddock with artistry expressed the over-nice sham refinement of that superbly comic snob, Cokane. Harold Scott displayed with notable success the character and outlook of Lickcheese, before and after his metamorphosis. There was nothing mesmeric about Stanley van Beers as Sartorius. This character is so sharply etched by his creator that the human actor inevitably softens the outline. Neither Mr. Sartorius nor his daughter showed that proud consciousness of good apparel that the name indicates. In the case of the father, he could not, for he was not particularly well-dressed, but Blanche's clothes deserved better treatment than they received on the second night. H.G.M.

### "The Damask Cheek"

**T**HE "heiress" in this pleasant Van Druten-Lloyd Morris tale of American manners—1909 model—is an English young lady, allegedly much plainer than charming Jane Baxter could ever hope to appear. There are, however, no psychological subtleties in this "girl gets boy" idyll, though some gentle humour and the odd spot of fireworks when Miss Baxter loses her temper and tears the hair from her rival in a rollicking free fight.

Iris Hoey as a typical American matron of the time, presides over the domestic scene with well-meaning fussiness, and Patricia

Raine provides a nice contrast as a none-too-scrupulous and slightly "loud" young actress, who is "bought off" the young man by Miss Baxter (whose financial assets must be considerable). Bill Travers is this ingenious much-sought-after swain, and Richard Leech his more sophisticated friend. To young David O'Brien go some of the chief honours for his wholly amusing portrayal of the "kid brother," and Claire Bloom misses no opportunities in her portrayal of adolescent girlhood.

The—to us now—odd looking fashions of 1909 are faithfully reproduced, and though *The Damask Cheek* does not set the Thames on fire, it has a charm of its own. F.S.

### "The Human Touch"

**C**ONSIDERING the interest of the theme, and the sincerity of the authors' approach, it is rather puzzling that J. Lee-Thompson and Dudley Leslie's new play about Dr. James Simpson and the discovery of chloroform fails to grip the emotions. Perhaps too much is attempted, and the fusion of documentary and the human touch is not satisfactorily achieved.

All the same the play is most sincerely acted by a first-rate company, with Alec Guinness as the young Dr. Simpson and Sophie Stewart as his kindly and wise Scottish wife. These two gain our sympathy in their struggle to break down the prejudices of the Edinburgh medicos, in the course of which Dr. Simpson loses his young son, and is charged with insanity. John Laurie as Professor Syme, who leads the opposition, gives another splendid performance, and we are almost persuaded to believe in his eleventh hour *volte face*, which saves Simpson from being certified as insane. John Gregson as Gilchrist, Dr. Simpson's young assistant, made a good impression. F.S.

### "The Passing of the Third Floor Back"

**A** VERY good company has been assembled for the revival of Jerome K. Jerome's dramatic tract, *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*. First made famous by Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson in 1907, this is one of the plays that never fail on the English stage. It is regrettably sentimental and contains much to infuriate superior persons. With moral regeneration as its theme, it necessarily ignores the difficulties that exist in reality. Art is largely elimination and surely so superb a piece of theatre as *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* is a work of art. To introduce a people's religious faith into a comedy, even to personification, get by the censor and give no offence—indeed, much satisfaction—to the faithful, is no mean achievement. Instead of the ancient *deus ex machina*, Jerome introduced

(Continued on page 12)





● (Above left): Diana Churchill, Max Adrian and Rose Hill in "In the D'Oyle Cart," an amusing skit on opera. (Above): Elisabeth Welch sings "Just Across the Way," one of her most attractive numbers, and (left) Kenneth Connor and Marjorie Dunkels in "Stars Look Down," in which Miss Dunkels has made a big hit with her clever impressions of famous stage stars. (Below): Charlotte Mitchell as the cheeky Cockney girl in her own sketch, "Fish and Chips."

PICTURES BY ANGUS  
McBEAN

## "Oranges and Lemons"

This new intimate revue, devised and directed by Laurier Lister, has proved an outstanding success, and on this page are some of the clever personalities who are delighting audiences at the Globe.





"the pale compassionate God" of the Christian to remove personal difficulties by merely appearing. Correct adjustment, bringing health and happiness, the most up-to-date people believe in that. Anthony Hawtreys held the right note and attitude and presented the Stranger so as not to offend the taste of the cultivated or the simple faith of the earnest believer. I think it would be conceded that the author himself believed.

Good support was given by the entire company. One should mention particularly Marjory Hawtreys, Avice Landone, Doris Rogers, Joan Sanderson, and Lloyd Pearson. The important part of the maid of all work, Stasia, was beautifully acted by Mary Kimber. With her eyes shining as having seen the one true light, she swept aside any disposition there may have been in front to hold out against the play. H.G.M.

#### OPERA

### "The Marriage of Figaro"

ON 22nd January the Covent Garden Opera Trust presented Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* in a new English version by Edward J. Dent. Both for music and spectacle, the performance maintained a high level calling for praise. Karl Rankl conducted with dramatic verve. Peter Brook had produced.

Geraint Evans was a lively but not very loud Figaro and moved with harlequin lightness and grace. A sparkling performance indeed was Elizabeth Schwarzkopf's vivacious Susanna, gay, pretty and provocative. Her voice and her glance came straight to the listener, clearly, accurately, delightfully. Some of the voices seemed of insufficient power for the building. Not so, Howell Glynne, who gave to Doctor Bartolo a robust comicality in voice as well as action. Eugenia Zareska made Cherubino an exceedingly dainty figurine, a beautiful child, too obviously guileless and modest for the requirements of the story. Her voice was sweet but not always sufficiently dominant. Hans Braun as the Count was dignified, perhaps too dignified, conveying no hint of passion of any kind. Phlegmatic, he was apparently moved by a sense of responsibility. Sylvia Fisher was a great success in the part of the Countess and cast a spell by her singing, particularly in the 3rd Act, when well-meant applause interrupted the flow of the music.

The costumes by Rolf Gerard were historically correct, not fanciful or fantastically, and gave reality to the characters. Indeed, they were so perfect in taste that characterisation was correspondingly diminished. Something of impudence, a touch of

(Continued on page 30)

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*Bumble*: I bought this hat for business reasons. I was lunching with Mr. Svenson who, in addition to being keenly interested in Harris tweeds, is known as the Wolf of Stockholm.

Yvonne Arnaud as Mrs. Beatrix Pelham (*Bumble*) and Arthur Macrae (the author of the play) as Tom Wright, her harrassed Secretary. The scene is the Hotel Gustav Adolph.

## “*Traveller's Joy*” AT THE CRITERION

**T**HIS delightfully amusing play remains one of the big comedy hits in town and has already passed its 300th performance at the Criterion Theatre, where packed audiences have enjoyed to the full this most topical skit on the plight of English people who find themselves stranded on the Continent without currency. In this case the theme is centred in a most attractive if foolish business woman who is in Stockholm with her Secretary and who, through gross extravagance, is marooned in a luxury hotel. It goes without saying that Yvonne Arnaud is delicious in this role and the sup-

porting players spare no effort to sustain the many amusing situations.

Richard Bird has directed the play with an eye to the speedy development of the plot and Anthony Holland's decor is most pleasing to the eye.

*Traveller's Joy* is unusual in that its author, Arthur Macrae, appears in a leading part, and it must be a great satisfaction to him that his comedy is running on merrily into yet another holiday season and that current legislation still makes it possible for unwary travellers abroad to exceed their permitted allowance.

PICTURES BY HOUSTON-ROGERS





*Nicholas:* It says that Mr. Reginald Pelham, the well-known British industrialist, is also in Stockholm. I naturally presumed . . .

Nicholas Rafferty (Derek Aylward), a young friend who is also in financial straits, brings news that Bumble's ex-husband is in Stockholm.



*Miss Tilsen (Billie Hill):* I said it will be a pleasure to do our best for you.

*Reggie:* It's so many years since I've heard kind words like that. It comes as rather a shock. I . . . I don't have to have any priority?

Mr. Pelham (Charles Victor) is welcomed by the manageress at the Hotel Gustav Adolph.



*Reggie:* I'm the new pauper! The new British model! You'll see me all over Europe — sitting in restaurants — furtively counting my small change under the table.

*Eva:* It is bad for you, I know.

Mr. Pelham has a heart to heart talk with the saucy little maid at the hotel (Dora Bryan). Later, when he and Bumble meet again neither realises at first that the other is financially embarrassed, through over-spending their allowance.





(Above):

Bumble: I have ordered tea for one.

Tom: You have? Why? Have you got hold of some money?

Bumble: Er . . . er . . . No, no! But one must exist. You can have some of my tea.

Eggie: Tea for one with three cups!

Eggie interrupts a telling piece of conversation.

(Below):

Tom: That is my coat.

Eva: The lady said you wish to sell.

Tom: Did she? The lady made a little mistake.

It becomes obvious that Bumble is leaving no stone unturned in her effort to acquire a little ready cash.







*Lil:* Help your own, by all means. Your family and so on. But don't tell me we can all suddenly want to share everything with complete strangers.

*Reggie:* Well . . . er . . . perhaps not a complete stranger.

*Lil:* Well, any sort of stranger. Because I mean if we can do that then we've all got beautiful natures, and if we've all got such beautiful natures why is the world in such a beautiful muck-up?

Reggie, who is getting desperate, invites up to Bumble's suite an attractive if rather loud young woman he met in the bar. He hopes he may be able to borrow some money from her.

(Helen Christie as Lil Fowler.)

(Below):

*Reggie:* Only a cad makes love to a married woman.

*Lil:* I love cads.

*Reggie:* Oh! Do you?

Lil proves a handful and Reggie has difficulty in extricating himself from an embarrassing situation.





umble: I was so cross with Reggie.  
"Don't show your face in here,  
Reggie," I said.

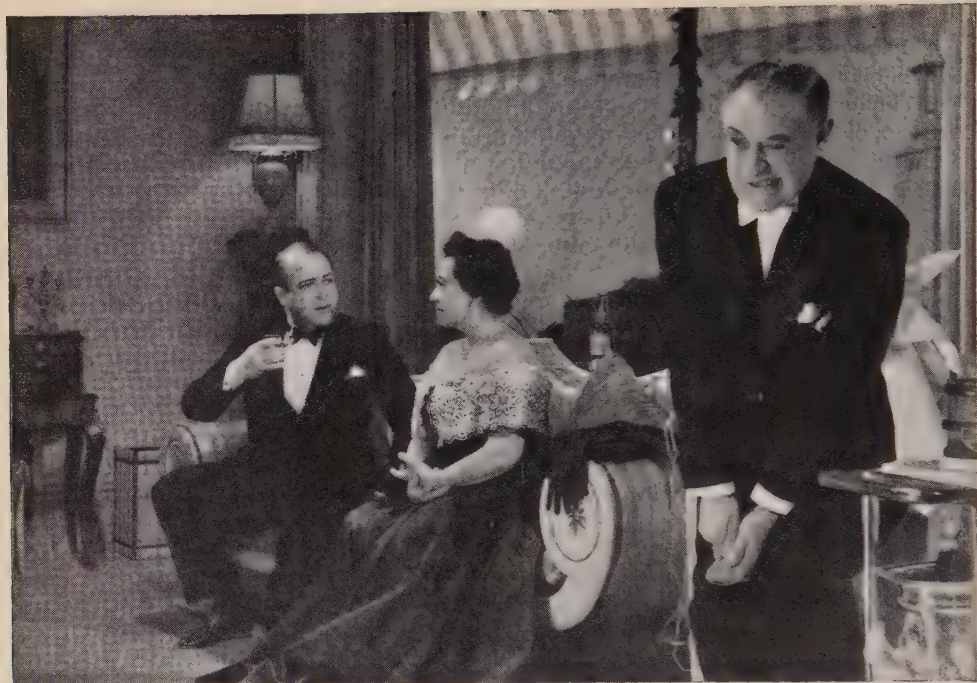
When Lil's husband, Sydney  
owler (Alexander Gauge) comes  
up to her suite later that evening,  
umble very cleverly steps into  
the breach and gives Reggie fair  
warning to get out of the room.  
But Reggie is observed and has  
no option but to pretend he is  
the waiter.

(Below):

Miss Tilsen: But . . . you must not do  
this. I will send someone . . .  
Reggie: No, no! It's quite all right,  
Madam. I can manage alone, Madam.

Further complication ensues  
when the manageress arrives.





*Fowler:* I wondered why you were so pally with your ex-husband. Like having the Bank of England here, isn't it?

*Bumble:* Oh! But I'm afraid he's no better off than I am.

*Fowler:* Don't be silly! That's what he tells you. Don't tell me a man like him can't fiddle as much as he wants. All those big business men are the same. Just big time crooks.

In his role as waiter Reggie overhears some interesting conversation between his ex-wife and Sydney Fowler.



*(Left):*

*Eva:* I am telling him that I am buying this hat from Mrs. Pelham.

*Bumble:* Oh? You are buying it from me, are you? Isn't that interesting? How much are you paying me for it?

The tables are turned on Bumble when she catches Eva going out the next morning in her expensive new hat.



Reggie: May I stick my handkerchiefs on your mirror?

Bumble: No—I've got a travelling iron. Why wouldn't you let me wash them?

Reggie: I managed very well. In England I own two laundries.

By now Reggie is quite at home in Bumble's suite and, with Tom, they are exploring every avenue that looks financially hopeful.



Fowler: If I were in fact a Treasury official.

Reggie: What?

Fowler: My dear Mr. and Mrs. Pelham. I'm afraid I'm not anything to do with the Treasury.

An ugly moment develops for the Pelhams over a matter of an i.o.u., but it transpires that Fowler is trying a little polite blackmail, and by some dexterous manoeuvring they manage to call his bluff.



Reggie: Last night. Did he ask you to marry him?

Bumble: Oh, my dear. You mustn't mind...

Bumble perceives that Reggie is falling in love with her all over again and makes him jealous by suggesting—quite erroneously—that an old flame of hers, Lord Tilbrook, had proposed to her the night before.





*Olson:* Oh, please! You are not offended that I wish to pay?

*Reggie:* No, no, no! I'm not offended. You are not, are you, Bumble?

*Bumble:* I shall get over it!

A most unexpected eleventh hour solution comes with the arrival of a Mr. Olson (Ernst Ulman), who, wishing to boost his new hotel, invites the Pelhams to stay as his guests, thinking that such distinguished people will be a splendid advertisement.



*Olson:* It is our bridal suite!

*Bumble:* Er . . . Well, you see . . . Mr. Pelham and I *were* married some years ago, and . . .

*Olson:* Good! then you will have a second honeymoon!

**The happy ending to the play.**



## "Miss Mabel"

● Scenes from R. C. Sheriff's clever new play which is produced by Norman Marshall and presented at the Strand by Alec L. Rea. In construction *Miss Mabel* is a model play of considerable ingenuity, and its story of a kindly elderly lady who forges her unpleasant twin sister's will and then subsequently quietly murders her so that a group of deserving people shall have the money to achieve their ambitions, is told with great humanity, humour and in pleasing dialogue. Indeed *Miss Mabel* is one of the most attractive plays London has seen for a long time, and is likely to charm theatregoers for many months to come.

(Right):

MARY JERROLD

who gives the performance of her career as the gentle Miss Mabel.

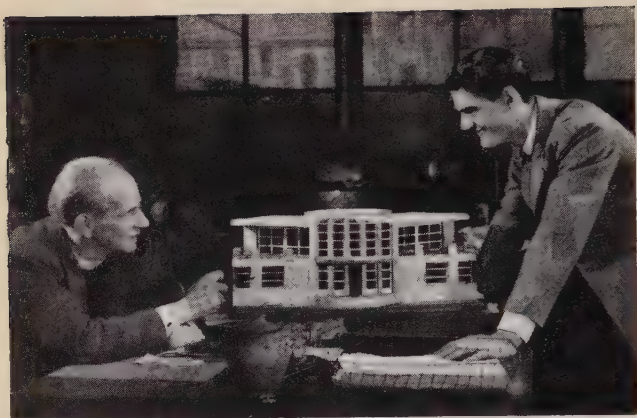
(Portrait by Fayer)



*Lawyer:* Where are you going?

*Gardener:* To buy my old woman a glass of port.

The scene during the reading of Miss Mabel's sister's Will. L. to R.: Richard Warner as the young doctor who wants to found a hospital, Mary Jerrold as Miss Mabel, Clive Morton as the lawyer, Sidney Monckton as the gardener longing for his own nurseries, Josephine Middleton and W. E. Holloway as the Vicar and his wife, who dream of a Children's Home by the sea, and Peter Murray as the young man who wants to be an architect.



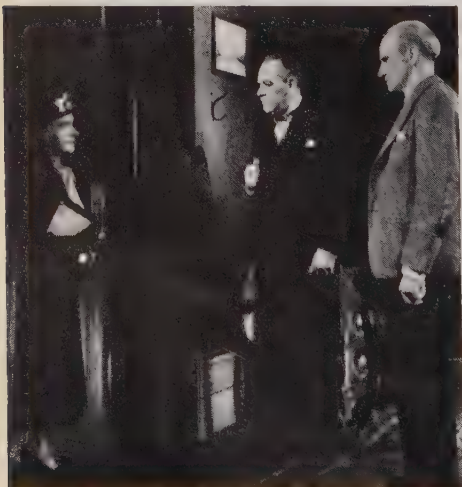
*Vicar: It's a perfect model for the seaside home.*

The Vicar and Peter discuss enthusiastically the latter's model for the Children's Home which, since the news of the legacies, has become a practical possibility. But, already, owing to a chance remark about the mole on Miss Mabel's face, the lawyer and the doctor have discovered the forgery and hasten to the Vicarage. There a long discussion develops as to the morals of the case.



*(Above):*

The embarrassing moment when Miss Mabel arrives and proceeds to admire the model. However, it has been agreed, in view of the fact that Miss Mabel was her sister's heir and would presumably have come into the money anyway, to overlook the forgery.



*(Left):*

The astonishing moment when Miss Mabel, thinking the lawyer has discovered all, mildly confesses not only to the forgery but to having poisoned her sister so that her friends might get the money for their plans.



*Maid (Anne West):* He said her not being here any longer would save the country a bit of food.

Miss Mabel's maid is questioned closely by the lawyer and the doctor, who are suspicious that the gardener, who openly disliked Miss Mabel's sister, may have been implicated in the murder.



*Vicar:* We are going to save you.

When Miss Mabel's friends have recovered from the shock their chief desire is to save her from the consequences of her crime, though they realise that, if the forgery could be overlooked, they can hardly make themselves accessories after the fact of murder, and that the law must take its course.



*Inspector:* Anything you say will be taken down and used in evidence.

The police come for Miss Mabel, who quietly prepares to go with them. It is only now that the lawyer grasps the simple logic of her outlook, for she faces the future with equanimity and had only given way to emotion when she was afraid her friends would save her from the supreme penalty, and so destroy her last opportunity of leaving them the money.

PICTURES BY HOUSTON-ROGERS



The scene in the living-room of the Longstreet home, New Brunswick, N.J., in the early autumn of 1913. L.-R.: Hermene French as Fran (Mama's sister); Sydney James as Henry Longstreet (Papa); Kay Kimber as Sara Longstreet (Mama); Michael Nicholls as Stevie Longstreet; Peter Felgate as Uncle Willie (Mama's brother) and Joan Heal as Nancy, the maid.



## "High Button Shoes"

AT THE HIPPODROME

*Left:* Fran and Hubert Ogglethorpe (Oggie), her boy friend, singing "Can't You See Yourself in Love with Me." (Jack Cooper as Oggie.)

PICTURES BY

HOUSTON-ROGERS

● **T**HIS new musical has already enjoyed a big success in New York. Jack Hylton's production over here of the Monte Proser/Joseph Kipness "Song and Dandy Show," follows the original closely, and will be remembered particularly for the many delightful dance sequences, notably the crazy Mack Sennett ballet in the second half. The ingenious Jerome Robbins dance arrange-

ments have been reproduced in London by Fred Hearn, while the production generally is in the capable hands of Archie Thomson, with Robert Nesbitt supervising the whole.

The 1913 setting has its own particular charm, and Lew Parker, Kay Kimber, Tommy Godfrey, Sydney James, Hermene French and Jack Cooper make the most of the theme: that of a confidence trickster's nefarious doings and his ultimate undoing.



Harrison Floy (Lew Parker, in glasses), a confidence trickster, returns to his home town with his accomplice, Mr. Pontdue (Tommy Godfrey) and has soon wormed his way into the Longstreet home where he proceeds to trick Papa in a motor car deal.



(Below right):

Harrison Floy, Mr. Pontdue and the Longstreet family with the early Ford model Papa has bought.



(Below):

The scene near the Stadium during which the number "Next to Texas I Love You," is sung by Fran and Oggle Boys and Girls.





Mama surprises her brother dancing a new-fangled tango with Nancy, the maid. One of the cleverest dances in the show in which Joan Heal reveals herself as a first-class dancer and comedienne.



Messrs. Floy and Pontdue arrive at the Longstreet home where Mr. Floy has arranged to give a talk to the ladies of the local Bird Watching Society.



The ladies are obviously entranced by Mr. Floy, whose knowledge of bird life, however, proves to be very elementary indeed. But he seizes the opportunity to interest his audience in a bogus scheme for developing land on the outskirts of the town, which subsequently proves to be nothing more than a swamp.



(Right):

Fran and Harrison Floy in the scene at "Longstreetville," the site for the new town boosted by Mr. Floy. Here they are singing a reprise of "Can't You See Yourself in Love With Me," for Fran has transferred her affections from Oggle, and has been made treasurer of the new company in which her father has sunk all his capital.



(Below):

Papa is exhausted after dancing the polka with Mama, which follows their song "Papa, won't you dance with me?" the hit tune of the show.





The charming "Finalette" scene which closes Act 1.



(Above): Harrison Floy dancing with the crooks (Andre Cordova, Jean Allison and Jane Evans) during the brilliant Mack Sennett ballet which is the high-spot of Act 2.

(Left): Mr. Floy and his stooge in an amusing moment during the Princeton v. Rutgers ("Nobody ever died for dear old Rutgers") item towards the end of the show.



# "Can the Leopard..?"

by ERIC JOHNS

NO one can charge our leading players with lack of enterprise. At the present moment the West-End offers two courageous instances of established stars trying their hand at highly specialised work, never previously considered their line of business. At the Prince of Wales in *Harvey*, Sid Field is playing his first straight part, after thirty years in musical shows; at the Globe, by way of contrast, Diana Churchill appears for the first time in revue, after devoting the previous years of her career to the legitimate stage. Both these artists took a risk, and in each case their change-over, being something more than a walk-over, entailed hours of intensive study. Perhaps, in the process of changing her spots, Diana Churchill endured the more trying metamorphosis.

Often when seeing revues in company of her actor-husband, Barry K. Barnes, she had remarked how exhilarating it must be to play in that particular medium, which was then a closed book to her. She once deserted the straight stage about the time of the Munich Crisis to appear in *Bobby Get Your Gun*, a musical play with Bobby Howes, Gertrude Niesen, Bertha Belmore and Wylie Watson in the cast. She had not enjoyed the experience very much; she felt more attracted towards the atmosphere of intimate revue, though she took no steps towards playing in one.

When Laurier Lister was devising *Oranges and Lemons* as a successor to *Tuppence Coloured* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, he looked for a star to share the laurels with Elisabeth Welch and Max Adrian. His friend, John Perry, the man who dramatised *A Man About the House* so effectively for Flora Robson, had a brain-wave. He suggested Diana Churchill. The idea took her so completely by surprise that she asked for a week to consider it. There were some long fire-side chats with Barry K. Barnes before she finally decided to take the plunge.

The first fortnight of rehearsal proved a nightmare she will never forget. Laurier Lister, the director, was patience itself, and the cast as helpful as they could be, but, for all that, Diana suffered agony. It was not easy for a novice to join a company of artists already conversant with revue technique. It was like being taken out of a student class at the academy and given a star part in the West-End, with no practical experience for the job. They were asking her to run before she had managed to walk. Being familiar with her versatility as an actress, Laurier Lister knew she would master all the intricacies of the new medium,



DIANA CHURCHILL

(Portrait by Angus McBean)

but it was not accomplished without something bordering on heartbreak before the curtain went up on the first night.

The curtain had not been up very long before the people in the house were conscious of the birth of a new revue star of considerable talents. They were moved to tears by her monologue as the teacher losing her grip on a class too large to permit individual tuition; they smiled at her impression of a "refaned" saleslady and rocked with laughter at her burlesque of a D'Oyly Carte prima donna. Everything appeared to be within her reach and very much to their taste. It was certainly an undisputed over-night conquest.

Diana found the new medium rather difficult, partly through not being one of those actresses with surprising parlour tricks capable of fitting easily into revue. Nor had she ever read a revue script in her life. She was used to reading plays and from the type-written page she could form some idea of how the piece would appear on the stage. But it was all so strange with a revue number, which could look so very different in the theatre. A solo number in revue, such as her teacher or saleslady in *Oranges and Lemons*, is not the same as a soliloquy in a play. In a play there is a story behind

(Continued overleaf)

## "Can the Leopard . . . ?" (Continued)

the character, which is gradually built up between the author and the actress. The revue artist has to start from scratch and create her impression in a matter of seconds. Both the writing and the acting are vastly different.

When Diana joined the cast of *Oranges and Lemons* there were still some items to be written. She was asked what she would like to do. It was all so strange. She had no idea, but thought she might like to try a number in a voice of phoney refinement. Young Charlotte Mitchell, whose study of the child in the fish-and-chip shop is one of the gems of the show, was commissioned to write the saleslady sketch—the young department store assistant who has never heard of utility garments. It proved a piece of brilliant writing and conferred upon Diana the rank of distinguished diseuse.

Most people are inclined to imagine that taking a leading part in revue is more tiring than playing in a straight play. Diana begs to differ. She finds it more exhausting to concentrate for an entire evening on a heavy part, which makes it impossible to relax for a moment. One has to concentrate in revue, of course, but there are occasional lighter moments of welcome relief. Despite the constant changing of costume, Diana enjoys darting from one item to another and finds it fun to be permitted to fool in public, as in the D'Oyly Carte burlesque.

Never will she forget the encouragement she received from her new colleagues, and the words of comfort and wisdom they whispered in those agonising early rehearsals. She was amazed at the interest which the younger members of the cast took in each other's work. There was no suggestion of that cut-throat competition which one might expect in a show where individual talents are glorified and count for so much. These young artists were not interested merely in their own parts. At rehearsal they sat out in front and watched their colleagues, only too ready to offer constructive criticism. Never in all her experience of the theatre has Diana seen so many people all working for the general good of a show. It was decidedly gratifying to discover unselfish team-work where one would least expect to find it.

## New Shows of the Month (Continued)

artistic vulgarity, would not have been amiss in Figaro's habiliments. More enclosed sets might have seemed more appropriate dramatically, but one would not willingly sacrifice the very beautiful open picture in blue and gold that was provided for the Countess's bouquet.

Piquant and apropos was the exhibition in St. Martin's Lane of prints and playbills from the collection of Mr. Harry Beard, tracing the history of *The Marriage of Figaro* in the English theatre. This will now have been followed appropriately by a similar exhibition relating to *The School for Scandal*. Clearly, the general interest in Theatre research is widening. H.G.M.

## COMPANY MEETING

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The 47th annual ordinary general meeting of Raphael Tuck & Sons Limited was held recently in London.

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The volume of sales of all those productions had, however, undoubtedly suffered by the imposition of purchase tax, somewhat aptly described by a critic as "that fiscal monstrosity." Indeed, with a few minor exceptions, greeting cards were subject to 100 per cent. purchase tax. The time had long passed, in his judgment, for the lowering or, better still, complete removal of the unreasonable handicap on the free and unfettered use of art reproductions in all their forms.

With the change-over from a seller's to a buyer's market they had been directing their attention more and more to the necessity of intensifying the scope of their sales, and that with satisfactory results notwithstanding the contradictory policy of one Government department which called for more and more production whilst another restricted petrol allowances to travelling salesmen and hampered the sale of the goods produced.

The report was adopted.

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A scene from *Kiss Me, Kate*, the riotously clever new Cole Porter musical based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, which is a big success at the Century Theatre. In the picture, L. to R., are Patricia Morison, Alfred Drake, Lisa Kirk and Harold Lang in the "We Open in Venice" number. (Picture by Eileen Darby)

# Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN

COLE Porter's lyrics for the merry musical mint, *Kiss Me, Kate*, are as sharp, witty, "blue" and intricately rhymed as any that ever got together inside his delightfully sophisticated head, making his success the success of the show, and him the "comeback of the year," after too many scores over too many seasons that could only have been described—and were—as "cold" Porter. Musically, Mr. Porter has not entranced us with another "Begin the Beguine" or "Night and Day," doubtless because the bulk of the score is comprised of "business numbers" where the lyrics are all important, but still the radio is already incessantly droning out the moody ballad, "So in love am I," and Frank Sinatra has made a heinous recording of the torchy, "Why can't you behave?"

While Mr. Porter is the kingpin most responsible for making *Kiss Me, Kate* the biggest thing since *Annie Get Your Gun* (a second company to tour America is already being cast) the contributions made by his slick collaborators provided by the produ-

cers, Saint Subber and Lemuel Ayers (the latter designed those fresh settings and costumes for *Oklahoma!*) must not be underestimated. Bella and Samuel Spewack, authors of the popular farce, *Boy Meets Girl*, were commissioned to do the book, which tells of an egotistical actor and his temperamental ex-wife co-starring in a pre-Broadway engagement of *The Taming of the Shrew* with their personal, stormy battle of the sexes being uproariously carried over into Shakespeare's script, and the Spewacks have done a smooth job of setting up each scene so Mr. Porter may smack it home with one incomparable lyric after another. In the Shakespearean sections, some of these titles are "I've come to wive it wealthily in Padua," "Were thine that special face" and "Where is the life that late I led?" which should give you some inkling of the task Mr. Porter set for himself.

The bright, colourful settings and costumes which contribute so much to the carnival

(Continued on page 33)

# Whispers from the Wings

By  
LOOKER ON



SID FIELD

**S**ID Field has exploded a fallacy. In our time we have fallen under the spell of three remarkable women practising the art of the disease—Ruth Draper, Cornelia Otis Skinner, and Joyce Grenfell. Each of these great artists has the gift of crowding the stage with imaginary figures who become so vivid as to be practically visible, but as all these artists happen to be members of the fair sex, it could be assumed that they possess a magic denied to the mere male in the theatre. Sid Field has now struck a blow which, as far as producing characters out of thin air is concerned, establishes the equality of the sexes.

In the Pulitzer Prize play, *Harvey*, in which he is now appearing at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Sid Field, as Elwood P. Dowd, is constantly accompanied by an imaginary white rabbit, Harvey by name, and just over six feet in height. Like a pink elephant, Harvey is nothing more than a "boozers" hallucination, yet he becomes so real to Elwood that a place is laid for him at table, the family have to move up to make room for him on the sofa and an extra seat is reserved for him when they go to a show.

Mr. Field greets Harvey on the stage with that knowing smile reserved for one's best friend. It is all done with such conviction that we begin to see the rabbit, just as Ruth Draper makes us see all the various people with whom she comes into contact at a bazaar or a dance.

Mr. Field has beaten the ladies on their own ground and even gone ahead of them. He makes the rabbit's presence felt so vividly that many letters have been addressed to Harvey at the stage door. A seasoned playgoer recently looking at a photograph of Mr. Field as Elwood regretted Harvey was not in the picture. So convincing was Mr. Field's performance that this admirer began to believe he had actually seen the rabbit on the stage. The company cleverly keep up the pretence and share their curtain call with Harvey at the end. Athene Seyler and Mr. Field leave a space for him and exchange polite bows with him, according to the unwritten rules of professional etiquette, when the cast lines up after the show.

It was a gamble for Mr. Field to desert the revue stage and appear in his first straight play opposite an invisible stooge, but now that he has become used to the limitations imposed by a script upon his music hall technique, he is enjoying the experience enormously. He has resisted all temptation "to have a bash," as he calls it, and play for laughs which would be outside the framework of the play. Even though he has never appeared in a straight play previously he has had a lifetime of valuable experience in revue, experience which is priceless because he did so much more than exploit his own personality in those early vaudeville sketches. Each one was an individual characterisation, whether he appeared as a professional photographer, a golfing novice or a cinema organist.

Elwood, though a "boozers" is not a "drunk." Mr. Field would never have played a character in a state of permanent intoxication because he feels that such a person would soon bore an audience. In real life "drunks" soon become tedious. Even the pleasant ones talk far too much nonsense and leave us with a strong desire to escape, lest an innocent remark should unwittingly cause offence and result in a scene. Elwood is never repulsive; as devised by the author and played by Mr. Field, he is a pleasant sympathetic fellow, who looks for the good in people, and above all, cherishes a lasting affection for his over-grown white rabbit.

Now that Mr. Field has been accepted as an actor in the legitimate theatre, there is no fear of his wanting to play Hamlet. He is quite content to restrict himself to comedy parts. All comedians, except those who merely "crack gags" in music halls, have to

(Continued on page 36)



## Echoes from Broadway (Contd.)

atmosphere of this musical, were naturally designed by Mr. Ayers, and the choreography was entrusted to Hanya Holm, one of the more modern exponents of the modern dance, but curiously enough Miss Holm subordinated her striking talent so her dances could emerge as being all of a piece with the rest of the show. And this integration is of course, a tribute to the director, John C. Wilson.

It is only in the matter of casting that this enthusiast records a minor reservation. Although Alfred Drake, the original Curly of *Oklahoma!*, and Patricia Morison, the lovely fugitive from panic stricken Hollywood and "Z" pictures, are billed above the



MARTITA HUNT in a scene from *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, presented by Alfred de Liarge, Jr., at the Belasco Theatre, and which was reviewed by Mr. Mawby Green in our last issue. Miss Hunt's triumph in the title role has been much commented upon on both sides of the Atlantic. (Photo: Fred Fehl)

play as the stars, and sparkle as brightly as their material, we missed that extra something a top flight personality brings to the big, Broadway musical. There is, however, a vivacious young charmer featured in the cast, Lisa Kirk, who, if the movies don't make off with her, should one day develop into that top flight musical personality. The aforementioned "Why can't you behave?" falls to her fascinating lot, and she later halts the proceedings with the sprightly sex code for showgirls and models, called "Always true to you (In my fashion)" the most superior song of its type since Mr. Porter devastated us with "My heart belongs to Daddy."

On the other end of the musical axis, in direct opposition to the expansive Broadway professionalism of *Kiss Me, Kate*, is the intimate, high spirited amateurism of *Lend An Ear*, with the word "amateur" being used not as a synonym for "inept" but as "One who practices an art, not professionally, but for the love of it." This revue with sketches, music and lyrics, all by Charles Gaynor, a name new to Broadway, has been seven years in the making. In various forms, it had several small theatre engagements, until last year it blossomed forth in Hollywood of all places, and its instant success there had the New York managers bidding for the privilege of escorting it east, with William R. Katzell winning out by joining forces with the coast producers, Franklyn Gilbert and screen actor, William Eythe.

The "smallness" of Mr. Gaynor's talent is oddly enough the key to *Lend An Ear's* well deserved triumph; it is ideally suited to the intimate revue form, making its simple points simply, never aiming too satirically high or too broadly low, providing the youthful, not too experienced cast, with material they can carry off with the ease of experts.

The one, now famous exception to this rule, which doesn't necessarily prove it, is a fabulous take-off on the musicals of the '20s called "The Gladiola Girl," which is big enough, broad enough and satirical enough to just about "make" any revue in which it appeared. For sheer laughter provoking nonsense, it equals the hilarity caused by the Mack Sennett ballet in *High Button Shoes*, which we once called the funniest twenty minutes of the decade, and in intensity of laughter, the Charleston danced by a super energetic principal and a completely disinterested chorus line to "Doin' the Old Yahoo Step," is probably even greater.

Musically and lyrically, Mr. Gaynor hasn't demonstrated here that he has too much to offer. His one good lyric is "Neurotic you and Psychopathic me," and his one good melody, the torch song, "Who hit me?" yet all his musical numbers come over amazingly well, thanks to the superb orchestrations which feature two pianos, and the brilliant choreography of one of the finest young dancers in America, Gower Champion. He has taken some conventional ideas and turned them into pure kinetic excitement. For example, a secretary mooning over her boss sings the none too inspired, "I'm not in love," when Mr. Champion shoots out from behind an office desk "three dancing bosses" whose tremendous leaps first stun the audience into attention and then sets them applauding vigorously to the vibrant routine that follows; and with "Who hit me?" an unhappy girl slouches conventionally against the proscenium arch with the spotlight naturally picking out only her wan face as she bemoans her fate, when out from the

(Continued on page 37)

# English Plays in Moscow [by E. PARVATOV]

**S**HAKESPEARE is not the only English playwright the Soviet theatregoer knows and admires. Dramatisations of Dickens' novels, the comedies of Sheridan, Goldsmith and Fletcher; the plays of Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde and J. B. Priestley, have also achieved great popularity. Moscow theatres are now presenting twelve productions by English playwrights.

Soviet actors enjoy their parts in English classical plays. The women created by Shakespeare, Sheridan, Fletcher and Bernard Shaw particularly provide a wealth of material for impersonation. The charm and beauty of language, the depth of the psychological sketches of their characters have always appealed to leading actresses.

The Moscow Art Theatre is now producing three plays by English writers: Dickens' *Pickwick Club*, dramatised by Natalia Venkster; Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*; and Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*.

Natalia Venkster—an authority on English literature and a well-known writer—has dramatised several of Dickens' novels. She has succeeded in transmitting the charm and pathos of the works of the great English novelist, his exquisite style and the characteristic features of his writings. *The Pickwick Club* was first shown in 1934 and has since been performed 591 times. This alone shows how popular is the play.

Another work which has scored a big success at the Art Theatre is Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*. Olga Androvskaya, one of the most talented actresses in the Art Theatre Company, portrays Lady Teazle, the flighty, wavering, and in the end, repentant woman of fashion, with admirable ease and grace. The part of her husband—the aged Peter Teazle—is played by Mikhail Yanshin.

Olga Androvskaya is very different in the part of Miss Cheavely, the clever and cunning adventuress, who tries by means of blackmail to achieve her end, in Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*. Androvskaya features an outwardly brilliant and charming lady of the upper class, but behind this veil, the audience sees an evil designing woman prepared to go to any length to attain her selfish purpose.

The Maly Theatre is staging Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. The treatment accorded the play is fresh and bold, and Darya Zerkalova wins the sympathies of the audience with her artless, light-hearted Eliza. Beneath the shabby dress of her heroine beats a loving heart as she gradually develops from an uncouth flower-girl into a worthy, virtuous person. This actress is at her best in the scenes showing Eliza's struggle to maintain the dignity which Prof. Higgins failed to see in her. Indeed, the tremendous success of the production is chiefly due to the excellent playing of Darya Zerkalova, who was awarded the coveted Stalin prize for her performance as Eliza in *Pygmalion*.

The Lenin Komsomol Theatre has produced a dramatisation of Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* by Natalia Venkster, and of the many underlying stories of the book the one selected was that of John Harmon, the wealthy heir and his bride Bella Wilfer. Many of the characters in the novel, of course, have had to be moved into the background or entirely omitted.

Bella Wilfer—the heroine of the play—is performed by two actresses: Valentina Serova and Elena Fadeyeva. Serova's Bella is a temperamental, high spirited girl. Her evolution from covetous ambitions of wealth

(Continued  
on page 36)



A scene towards the end of the Moscow Art Theatre's production of Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, with Olga Androvskaya as Lady Teazle and Mikhail Yanshin as Sir Peter.





● Some scenes from outstanding Moscow productions of English classics. (Top): A spirited scene from the last act of *The Taming of the Shrew*, when Petruchio and Katharina are returning to Padua, showing (l. to r.), A. Kulagin as Gremio, V. Pestovsky as Petruchio, and L. Dobrzanskaya as Katharina in the Central Red Army Theatre production. (Above): A glimpse from *The Comedy of Errors*, as produced at the Central Transport Theatre, with (l. to r.) E. Fillipov as Dromio, V. Zeldin as Antipholus, Y. Zolotova as Luciana and A. Andreyeva as Adriania. (Right): The eavesdropping scene from the last act of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* at the Central Red Army Theatre. Kate (Alexeyeva) and Charles Marlow (Rakitin) are spied upon by their respective fathers (played by actors Sheket and Massonov).



and material gain to utmost fidelity of feeling, her resolve to return to poverty for the sake of her beloved, her readiness to make every sacrifice in the name of happiness and love—are revealed with truth and conviction.

The Bella of Elena Fadeyeva is more gentle and lyrical. Her heroine reveals a bright nature temporarily blackened by the hardships of life. Both interpretations are legitimate but the heroine presented by Fadeyeva probably stands nearer to the girl portrayed by the genius of Dickens.

Shakespeare's immortal tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* has recently been revived at the Moscow Drama Theatre. Of all Shakespeare's tragedies *Romeo and Juliet* has probably been produced most times. Juliet is performed by Maria Babanova, an actress of immense charm, who possesses a gentle and melodious voice; smooth, graceful movements and a child-like, somewhat capricious expression. Babanova as Juliet is the embodiment of poetry and love. The tragic image of Shakespeare's heroine is incarnate in her lyricism and captivating femininity.

The Bolshoi Theatre, incidentally, is staging a ballet of the same name to music by Sergei Prokofyev, and the Branch of the Bolshoi Theatre is presenting Gounod's opera *Romeo and Juliet*.

Among other English plays also to be seen in Moscow is Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, produced by Alexei Popov, which has been on the stage of the Central Red Army Theatre for over ten years. This same theatre has also produced Goldsmith's comedy *She Stoops to Conquer*; and the Moscow Ermolova Theatre is staging Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*. The Moscow Kamerny Theatre has, of course, recently produced J. B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*.

Moscow theatre lovers will soon see other English productions, including a new dramatisation of Dickens' *Dombey and Son* at the Moscow Art Theatre; *Hamlet*, in the production of the Theatre of Drama; Dickens' *Bleak House* at the Lenin Komsomol Theatre, and a number of other productions, all of which will be staged in the course of this season.

## Whispers from the Wings (Contd.)

be genuine actors, which is why so many of them have a desire to go on the straight stage and try their hand at a full-length part. Sid Field is proud of being a clown—a funny man who makes us both laugh and cry by continually getting into trouble and always getting the worst end of the stick. It is not necessary for this actor to assume the clown's white pantaloons and a conical hat. He can express himself just as eloquently in the brown suit and trilby hat favoured by Elwood P. Dowd, his first, and let us hope by no means his last, part in the realm of three-act plays.



L. to R.: Douglas Bethell as Fabian, Charles Workman as Sir Toby Belch, Peter Beadle as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and Anthony Hughes as Feste, eavesdrop upon Malvolio (played by St. John Tayleur). A scene from the production of *Twelfth Night* mentioned below.

## Middle East Forces Theatre Club

**F**OLLOWING our recent references to the B.A.O.R. Theatre Club in Germany comes news of another flourishing Army Theatre Club, that of the G.H.Q. Middle East Forces in Egypt.

Founded in April 1947, this club has a somewhat unusual theatre, which was built largely by German prisoners of war. The stage is similar to that of an ordinary theatre but the auditorium is in the open air, a great advantage during the hot summer, though during the colder winter months it can be roofed in.

During the past two years some twenty plays have been produced, the most successful being *Rebecca*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Ten Minute Alibi*, *The Man of Destiny* and *Lovers' Leap*. The company has been privileged in having three producers with previous professional experience, namely, Douglas Maclagan, formerly of the Newcastle Playhouse, St. John Tayleur, formerly of the Oxford Repertory Company, and, in particular, Charles Workman, son of the famous star of *The Chocolate Soldier* and of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

The club's most recent success was a delightful open air production by Charles Workman of *Twelfth Night*, which was held in the Chief of Staff's garden by the shores of the Great Bitter Lake. A special performance was given for the visit of the American Navy, attended by Gen. Sir John Crocker, C-in-C. Middle East Forces, Admiral Connolly, U.S. Navy, and the American Ambassador. In the cast were Lt.-Gen. R. M. Gale, who appeared as a sea captain, and Maj.-Gen. Pyman in the role of the priest.





## At the Library Theatre, Manchester.

● AMONG some recent interesting new productions at the Library Theatre, where Peter Cotes' company have earned great praise, was a revival of Wilfrid Walter's *Happy and Glorious*, and in the pictures above are seen Joan Miller and Duncan Lamont in two scenes from the play. The centenary of Strindberg's birth was celebrated by a production of *Miss Julie* (never before seen in Manchester), and was followed by a revival of Arnold Bennett's *What the Public Wants* (date 1910), which Peter Cotes produced in present-day clothes. Before the season ends in April, Mr. Cotes is also presenting a new American play dealing with a burning American social problem which promises to be as applicable to the American scene in 1949 as *Pick-up Girl* was in 1946.

(Pictures by Kemsley Studios)

## Echoes from Broadway (Contd.)

wings Mr. C. sends stalking the cause of her trouble, has him back straddle a chair, stare intently at the girl, and before dancing a step, everyone knows who hit her and everyone knows she'll be carrying that torch forever. And when solely on his own, without the burden of having to rescue mediocre song numbers, Mr. Champion scores even more emphatically. His "Friday Dancing Class," which nostalgically sums up the childish pains of young he-boys forced to take dancing lessons with pretty little she-girls, is a lyric expression and poignant theatre.

Among the bunch of infectious performers, one Carol Channing, a big blonde with huge, myopic eyes, stands out as the comedy find of years. With a deadpan face and delivery, she creates the illusion that she hasn't the faintest idea of how funny she is, but when you start totting up how wonderfully comic she is in a variety of sketches, you begin to realise how fully in control of her talent she must be.

Now apart from the *Kiss Me, Kates* and the *Lend An Ears*, Broadway, if not the critics, can usually find a place for the brash and brassy, rather cheap and vulgar musicals. Arthur Lesser, Maurice Chevalier's

manager, tried to fill the gap with the revue, *Along Fifth Avenue*, starring that tough, Little Rock of Gibraltar, Nancy Walker, and almost succeeded, and positively would have, if the late Willie Howard, who took ill while the show was trying out in Philadelphia and died on the eve of the Broadway opening, could have made the premiere. The veteran Mr. Howard, with his own brand of comic genius, could bring genuine style as well as huge laughs to the lowest form of burlesque humour, which even the arch-critics of this type of material would willingly accept when little Willie winningly served it up.

As it now rests, the top show spot of *Along Fifth Avenue* is "Chant D'Amour," sung by Miss Walker in the form of an American apache perched atop of a newsstand. It is a "My Man" song to end all "My Man" songs, with the gentleman in question being a chap named Irving: a fine satirical idea which soon gets down to the level of the rest of the revue, ending with the line, "Let's face it, I'm in love with a slob."

The most fascinating thing about the third revue of the month, *All For Love*, apart from the fact there's not one good number in twenty-one, is that the co-producer and

(Continued overleaf)

## New Perfume Idea

As a feminist I am often a little perturbed that men so often design our clothes, harmonise our make-up and blend our perfumes, but it is a fact that in most cases they do produce the right goods. We certainly should not complain when the brilliant perfume creator, Mr. D. R. Collins, gets to work, for now he has produced exactly what we have all been wanting for years, even without realising it—two matching perfumes, one for day wear and the other



a sophisticated perfume that blends with the first, and so can be added for evening wear.

The two perfumes are quite different but are so perfectly harmonised that the two can actually be worn together. This adds variety and individuality to the perfume as very few women would use the same amount of each.

"Decision" is a refreshing floral blend, suitable for home use but just faintly sophisticated, so that business women will find it just right for daytime use. "Vibration" is a more exciting and exotic blend, but is not a heavy perfume. It cannot clash with "Decision," no matter what amount of the perfume remains.

Mr. Collins created the dual perfumes because he was nasally irritated by mingled perfumes on women who had used two different fragrances during the day. Both may have been excellent alone, but clashed when superimposed on one another.

The bottles are most attractive and the large and medium sizes are well and decoratively boxed in the "French" style. A pair of bottles in medium size at 29/6 make an excellent gift and two jolly handbag phials at 5/- in the newly designed bottles are exceptionally good value. The two fragrances can be purchased separately, but I am sure most women will want the "twins."

### SPRING TONIC

Most skins get a little jaded during the winter, when most of us get less fresh air than we should. A fine toning up prepara-

tion is Pomeroy's "Eau des Fleurs"—a mild and fragrant toilet water. It tightens up the skin and makes it feel really fresh and ready for the Spring sunshine.

This tonic is useful in helping to get rid of a double chin. A pad of cotton wool soaked in Eau des Fleurs wound round a flat piece of wood or ruler and patted vigorously on the surplus fat night and morning works wonders. Eau de Cologne would also do for this operation, or any astringent; but these are rather drying for a sensitive skin, or one that tends to be naturally dry.

## Echoes from Broadway (Continued)

sole backer, Anthony B. Farrell, is determined to keep it running although it must be losing at least \$10,000 per week. This is the same Mr. Farrell who tried to do the same thing with last season's *Hold It* and failed, and whose interest in the theatre has cost him over two million dollars in two years—the big bulk going towards the purchase of the Warner Bros. Hollywood Theatre on Broadway to ensure him of a showcase for his follies.

The highest grossing musical on Broadway is Michael Todd's *As The Girls Go*, starring America's greatest comedian, Bobby Clark, but still its fabulous success almost completely eludes us and its seven rave notices out of nine, has us completely flabbergasted. We'll willingly concede Mr. Clark is the funniest man over here, but never have we seen him struggle so helplessly for want of material. Originally a "book" show about the husband of the first woman President of the United States (the lovely and gracious Irene Rich)—a wonderful idea—it has turned up, after a lengthy cutting session on the road, more as a revue with tired sketches, stale blackouts and two double entendre songs, "American Cannes" and "I've got the President's ear." But this set-up with some long stemmed, provocatively undressed showgirls is apparently what the tired business man wants after years of *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *Finian's Rainbow* and *Brigadoon* art.

However, Art with the proverbial capital A, failed to make the Broadway grade when Ronald Duncan and Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* entered the local entertainment stakes. Besides finding the music short on melody, the majority agreed that only a couple of Englishmen could treat such a violent, emotional story so sexlessly, although Mae West, in her curtain speech after her triumphant return to New York in the twenty-one year old *Diamond Lil*, gave us credit for a few red blood cells. Miss West said she had recently returned from a very successful engagement in London, where the audiences were also crazy about *Diamond Lil*, "which proves the English are interested in sex, too."

(Continued on page 40)



## Amateur Stage

**D**URING the week of 14th-19th February the National Operatic and Dramatic Association celebrated its jubilee. N.O.D.A. was formed on 15th February 1899, and its origin is worth recording. Lancaster Operatic Society found itself in a dilemma on the eve of a production when one of their principals was taken ill. No substitute, in those days, could be found at short notice, and from the ensuing difficulty was born the idea of union and mutual help.

The original strength of N.O.D.A. was 39 societies, which grew to 100 in 1914. But the upsurge of amateur work after 1919 soon altered the picture. N.O.D.A. moved headquarters to London from the North of England, amalgamation with the Scottish Federation of Amateurs and the London Association took place, and today it includes nearly 1,000 societies, mostly large operatic groups, with many individual members.

Assisted by grants from the Carnegie Trust, the Association's library now includes 40,000 volumes, and being largely musical it is unique in the country. Jubilee celebrations are intended to foster the object of providing N.O.D.A. with its own London headquarters, for which purpose a special fund is steadily growing.

\* \* \*

The festival of new plays by Civil Service authors opens at Cripplegate on 9th March with *The Courageous Sex*, by Dr. Mary Sheridan, of the Home Office, a descendant of the author of *School for Scandal*. Mr. L. A. G. Strong is to be adjudicator, and on 28th May at the Café Royal he will announce his award and Lord Vansittart will present his trophy. Full particulars of this praiseworthy effort to encourage new work from Mr. Neilson Gattey, 78 North Side, London, S.W.4.

Sartre's *Vicious Circle* was given by Tavistock Repertory Co. in February, and on 10th-12th March they give the first performance in England of *The Hopeful Travellers*, by Obey and Martens.

Northampton Players report such a warm public response to Ibsen's *Ghosts* that their policy of choosing the worthwhile plays is to continue.

In aid of the Thames Valley Theatre Guild the Occasional Players gave *King Lear* at Twickenham in January. The cast was drawn from affiliated societies.

The Comedy Club gave *The Rose Without a Thorn* at Cripplegate in February, and in March produce *The Beaux Stratagem*.

Blackpool Festival of One-Act Plays takes place at the Grand Theatre on 14th-19th March.

Skegness Playgoers' Society is organising a one-act play festival in the Pier Pavilion on 28th May, open to amateur groups in six

(Continued overleaf)

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## Amateur Stage (Contd.)

adjacent counties. Details from Miss G. Dutton, Alghtha Lodge, Skegness.

Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, 1, has produced a handsome silver jubilee brochure, recording its achievements since 1924. It is a worthy record. Copies, 2/9, from the publicity manager.

Foreign Office D.S. has re-formed after its wartime lapse. It gave *Distinguished Gathering* last October, and on 29th-30th March will produce *Spring Tide* at the Twentieth Century Theatre.

As part of Twickenham Arts Festival all local societies supplied the cast for *The Rose Without a Thorn* on 17th-19th February. Players were chosen by open audition.

The March Saturday productions at Toynbee Hall's festival of European Theatre, 1860-1912, are *Easter* (Strindberg); *The Devil's Disciple* (Shaw); *The Kingdom of God* (Sierra); *Three Sisters* (Tchekov); *Trilby* (Potter). A public criticism follows each performance.

In the week of 28th February Oxford University D.S. produced *Richard II* at the Playhouse Theatre, using a large one-piece structure for set and lighting changes for different scenes.

Rose Theatre Club, Burnley, present the first folio version of *Hamlet* on 8th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 18th March; it is their seventh Shakespearean production since 1946.

*Power Without Glory* will be presented by the Fleet Street Players on 31st March, 1st April, at the Fortune Theatre.

On 8th March at 7 p.m. at the Grand Hall, Beckenham Baths, the Beckenham Children's Theatre is presenting *Emil and the Detectives*, by Erich Kaestner.

From 3rd-12th March Middlesbrough Little Theatre are presenting *The Distaff Side*, and on 14th March hold an audition for *Juno and the Paycock*.

**BACK NUMBERS** *Theatre World*, Feb. 1931 to Aug. 1948. Offers?—Eric Webb, Flat 5, 13 Craven St., London, W.C.2.

**FOR SALE**—Back numbers of *Theatre World*, years 1933-1940 inclusive, in linen folders, excellent condition. What offers?—Lowe, "Woodlands," Hartley Wintney, Hants.

**FOR SALE**—Complete library of *Theatre World*. As new. Offers to: W. D. Massey, High Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

**FOR SALE**—*Theatre World*, Jan. 1928-Dec. 1935, complete. *Play Pictorial*, 14 bound vols. (Nos. 1-168). Also 60 loose numbers bound vols. *Theatre*, 1909 (Penelope, Samson, etc.). Other books of *Theatre*.—Box 332.

**FOR SALE**—*Theatre World*, Nos. 152, 153, 155, 156, 157, 158, 169, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 180, 183, 188, 189, 190, 192, in good condition. Also *Play Pictorials*, 419 and 438. What offers?—Box 331.

**THEATRE WORLD**, Nos. Oct. 1942; July, Oct., Nov. 1943; Jan., Mar., Apr., May, July, Sept., Nov. 1944; Jan., Feb., Mar., May, June, Aug. to Dec. 1945; Jan. to Oct. 1946. Good condition. Offers?—Jones, 9 Derby Road, Duffield, Derby.

**SHORTHAND TYPIST**, aged 21, requires position as personal secretary in theatrical world.—Box 333.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Peace Comes to Peckham*, a comedy in three acts, by R. F. Delderfield. One interior. 5 m., 4 w. S. French. 4/-.

*Wild For To Hold*, play in one act, by T. B. Morris. Period 1526. Room in a castle. 4 m., 4 w. S. French. 1/6.

*The Grand Design*, play in one act by Falkland L. Cary. 4 w., 1 m. Chas. H. Fox. 1/6.

*May Week Revue*, three items from a revue. S. French. 2/6.

*Hansel and Gretel*, play in four scenes, by Herman Ould. 2 m., 3 w. S. French. 1/6.

*Probationer*, play in one act for six women, by Winifred Bannister. A. & J. Donaldson. 1/6.

*Four One Act Plays for Two Women*, by Agnes Adam. A. & J. Donaldson. 2/6.

*The Sunset Touch*, play in one act by Mary Dunn. Six females. Interior of girls' school. A. & J. Donaldson. 1/6.

## Mime Parade

AT the Fortune Theatre on 25th and 26th February a unique opportunity was given to see three performances of original mimes. The programme was designed to show how closely Mime is allied to all the Arts of the theatre—drama, dance, song and speech.

The performances were directed by Irene Mawer, who will be remembered for her production of the 3-act Mime play *L'Enfant Prodiges* at the Arts Theatre, and Doreen Woodcock, who played Phrynette in that production. Producers of the various items included Helga Burgess, who was seen in her own Mime in Archie de Bear's production of *Moonshine* at the Vaudeville; Margaret Rubel, Director of Mime at the Royal College of Music; Helen Wingrave; Grace Matchett; and Henrietta Fairhead, who is Director of the Midland Mime Company.

The performances were held under the auspices of the Institute of Mime, and the guest artiste was Harold Cheshire.

## Echoes from Broadway

Among the straight failures of the month were Edward Percy's *The Shop at Sly Corner*, with the publicity announcing "Karloff Kills Again" promising more shudders than were delivered; and Garson Kanin's *The Smile of the World*, in which Mr. Kanin tried re-telling the *Candida* story since he was so supremely successful with the *Pygmalion* one in *Born Yesterday*.

Meanwhile, *Death of a Salesman*, a new play by Arthur Miller, author of *All My Sons*, has just opened and emotionally shattered all who have seen it. It is a play to be ranked with Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* as the finest dramatic work produced in post-war America. Full comment will be given to it next month.



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